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CROP OUTLOOK FOR EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION

Mid-July to mid-August, 1949

The weather between mid-July and mid-August was favorable, on the whole, for the grain harvest in Europe but not in the Soviet Union, according to the monthly report on the European crop outlook by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Areas in central Europe which had had an abundance of cool and rainy weather early in the season enjoyed warm, dry weather, while much-needed rains fell in the dry areas of western Europe; with the exception of France. The harvest of small grains was completed in a number of countries and was well under way elsewhere, though somewhat delayed by rains in some north-western areas. The breadgrain output in Europe outside of the Soviet Union, it now appears, may turn out to be not far short of last year's crop and close to 90 percent of the 1935-39 average. For coarse grains it is still expected that the crop will be roughly equal to that of 1948, or about 90 percent of the prewar average.

The earlier dry spell, while broken in most countries, left definite deterioration of roots and forage crops. A few countries report sugar beets seriously in need of rain, but prospects for this crop remain generally favorable. The potato outlook continues to be for a crop considerably smaller than the large 1948 production. With some exceptions, notably in France, pastures are improved. Cuttings of hay have been small.

The fruit-crop outlook is good to very good in most of Europe, though the Scandinavian countries report average or below-average conditions.

Conditions for the oilseed crop for the most part are better than last year and olive oil production is expected to be considerably above the small 1948 crop.

In the Soviet Union heavy precipitation and other harvesting difficulties have caused considerable reduction of the grain crop which looked promising earlier in the season. Potatoes also suffered from too much moisture. Sugar beets and grass, on the other hand, benefited from the rain.

A summary of crop conditions by individual countries based on reports as of mid-August follows:

WESTERN EUROPE

United Kingdom: Rainfall was fairly general between mid-July and mid-August, relieving an extended period of dryness. Crop and pasture conditions have improved somewhat, although residual damage remains. The grain harvest was about two weeks earlier than usual, with dry weather favorable for cutting. Wheat yields are reported to be above average, though below last year. There is some uncertainty as to whether yields of spring grains will be up to average. The condition of fruits is good. Below average yields are in prospect for root crops.

Ireland: Pastures revived and threatened crops were saved by rains in late July and early August. Potatoes and oats, however, have suffered definite damage from drought. Wheat, barley and fodder beets are expected to give normal yields. Yields of hay were low, but of excellent quality.

Belgium: The grain harvest has been completed under excellent conditions and the crop is better than average. Potatoes are in good condition, and sugar beet yields are expected to equal the high yields of 1948. Pastures were very dry at the end of July, but rains were general in early August. A record fruit crop is expected.

Netherlands: Harvesting was progressing during the dry, warm weather in July and yield prospects for wheat, barley and oats continue good. Rye yields will be reduced because of lodging. General rains in early August have improved pastures, late grains, and vegetable crops but slowed up harvesting operations. Prospects for the apple and pear crop remain excellent.

France: Rains in the northern half of France have not been sufficient to relieve drought conditions appreciably and in the southern part the drought continues unbroken. The grain harvest is completed. Wheat yields will be lower than last year though still above the prewar average, while yields of other grains are expected to show little change and approximate the prewar level. The condition of potatoes is deteriorating. Sugar beets have withstood drought fairly well but more rain is essential. Pastures are scorched almost everywhere and the second and third cuttings of hay were poor. Fruit crops are generally fair, but less satisfactory than was hoped for earlier.

NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark: Growing conditions have on the whole continued favorable, though harvesting of grains was hindered by storms in early August. Sugar beets and fodder roots are in very good condition, and the rains were helpful to pastures. The hay crop was excellent. However, the fruit crop is expected to be smaller than last year.

Norway: A good hay crop of excellent quality was harvested in July, but the grain crop is expected to be 10 percent below that of last year. Potato yields are also estimated well below normal, as are fodder roots and vegetables. For fruit, the outlook is poor, with 40 to 60 percent of a normal crop of apples and pears in prospect.

Sweden: Crop prospects have improved due to rains in late July and early August. Normal yields are in prospect for grains and sugar beets. Yields slightly below normal were predicted earlier for potatoes and fodder roots, but recent rains have improved these crops, as well as pastures. Fall sown oil crops are in good condition, but spring sown crops have suffered from drought. The outlook is for an average fruit crop.

Finland: The grain harvest has been delayed and crops somewhat reduced due to relatively high August rainfall. Frost in July caused damage locally, particularly to potatoes, but did not affect the overall situation materially. A good hay crop was under roof by early August.

CENTRAL EUROPE

Bizonal Germany: Dry weather in southern and central areas was broken by heavy rains in early August. The breadgrain harvest promises to be very good. Both breadgrains and coarse grains are giving higher yields than a year ago. While the rains benefited potatoes, sugar beets and fodder beets, yields of these crops will be well below 1948. Both acreage and yields of oilseeds are much above last year. Earlier drought sharply reduced the second cutting of alfalfa and clover. Pastures as of early August were rated fair to good. Apple and pear crops as well as wine production appear to be above average.

Austria: Warm and dry weather in early July favored grain crops and by early August, 85 percent of the harvesting was completed. Preliminary estimates indicate breadgrain and coarse grain crops much larger than in 1948. Root crops are in good condition with above average yields in prospect. The condition of clover, alfalfa and pastures continues good, and the second hay crop was very satisfactory. Marketings of fruits and vegetables have been heavy.

Switzerland: Excessive dryness, heat and dry winds prevailed through July and early August. Grains withstood the weather comparatively well and may yield crops of almost the same size as last year. Pasture and hay in rotation, however, are in very poor condition. Late potatoes, sugar beets and fodder beets are badly in need of rain. Apple and pear crops as well as vineyards are seriously threatened by the dry spell.

Czechoslovakia: Crops developed satisfactorily during dry, warm weather in July and early August. Sub-soil moisture remains good. The grain crop appears very good. The rape seed crop is expected to be far better than last year. Sugar beets and potatoes are in need of rain. Hay and pastures are in good condition. Fruit and vegetable crops appear normal.

Poland: The crop outlook is good on the whole and harvesting progress is satisfactory. With the exception of apples, the fruit crop promises to be good this year in all areas.

Portugal: The drought continued and acreages devoted to irrigated crops have been materially reduced. Small grains have all been harvested. Estimates indicate a crop larger than in 1948 but below the prewar level. Rice fields are deteriorating. The outlook for olives is still favorable. Vineyards are suffering as a result of the heat. Forage is scarce and pastures are depleted.

Spain: The weather in August was unusually hot and dry. Estimates of grain (including rice) production are unchanged at about 80 percent of last year's level, but estimates for potatoes, sugar, oranges and olive oil have been revised downward from earlier estimates. Olive oil output, however, is still expected to be much larger than last year when an abnormally small olive crop was harvested. Pastures continue poor.

Italy: The wheat harvest has been finished with very good yields. Rice, corn and sugar beets were still in good condition at the end of July but persistent dry weather has begun to damage summer crops. The third cutting of meadows was poor, and estimates of total forage products indicate a much smaller output than in 1948. The condition of vineyards is generally good, but the citrus outlook only fair. Insect damage to olives is reported. Production estimates for certain vegetables indicate smaller crops than in 1948.

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Yugoslavia: Harvesting of bread grains was generally completed throughout the country in early August with reports of a crop slightly better than 1948, when it was below the prewar average. Corn in mid-August appeared in very good condition in most regions due to adequate moisture during the critical period and this crop also may be a little above that of 1948 when it was above the prewar average. In the usual deficit areas, crops are below normal due to earlier unfavorable weather conditions but this deficiency will be offset by good bread-and-feedgrain crops in the surplus areas. Acreage of sugar beets, sunflower and other industrial crops has been expanding under the 5-year plan and the tobacco crop appears to be good.

Bulgaria: During the first week of August harvesting of wheat, barley, and rye was nearing completion and the harvesting of millet had begun. Threshing was at its height in the north and was nearly completed in the south. Beans and sunflower collections had already begun. Heavy winds in late July and warm dry weather in early August had an unfavorable effect on late corn and other row crops in scattered areas. Rice was in very good condition and the picking and drying of tobacco continued under favorable conditions.

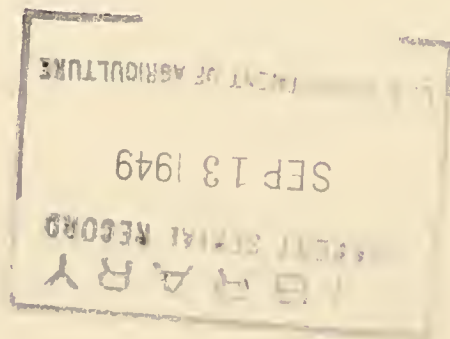
Rumania: Winter grain harvest started in the middle of July and one-third of the area was completed by late July. Appearance of crops in the western part of the country indicates all yields to be normal or better. In the south and east, spring crops, except corn, appear good. Corn is backward due to the tardy advent of warm dry weather. Prospects for deciduous fruit crops continue good. Hay crop has been favored by rains and second cut had already been started at the end of July in some sections of the country, with excellent curing prospects.

Hungary: Harvest returns tend to confirm previous reports of very good wheat and rye crops. A large outturn of spring grains, row crops and fruit is also expected.

SOVIET UNION

Reports of harvesting difficulties in a number of regions, due to wet, lodged and weedy grain, uneven or late ripening, short stand of the grain and shattering, continued early in August. Much grain that was cut was still unstacked early in August, and probably deteriorated during the heavy rains which were widespread. Considerable crop losses were reported, thus reducing the actual "barn" yield of what promised to be a good crop of grains--wheat, rye, oats and barley. The quality of the grain appears to be inferior in a number of regions.

The potato crop also suffered from the excess of rain. A good sugar beet crop is reported maturing in the Ukraine, the principal sugar beet region of the Soviet Union. Grass has been growing well, promising a good second cutting of hay. The pulling of fiber flax is lagging compared with last year in some of the most important growing regions, but is more advanced in others.



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